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NEWS FROM CONGRESSMAN RICK LARSEN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Link](#) to Larsen photo

Chair Larsen Opening Statement at Aviation Subcommittee Hearing on the "Status of the Boeing 737 MAX" May 15, 2019



Click [here](#) to view Rep. Larsen's opening statement.

Good morning and thank you to today's witnesses for joining the Subcommittee's discussion on the "Status of the Boeing 737 MAX."

346 people died in the Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 crash near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the Lion Air Flight 610 crash en route to Jakarta, Indonesia.

Congress has an obligation to the traveling public and the victims of these accidents and their families to ensure the safety of air travel.

If the public does not feel safe about flying then they won't fly; if they don't fly, airlines don't need to buy airplanes; if they don't need to buy airplanes, then airplanes don't need to be built; and if there is no need to build airplanes, then there will be no jobs in aviation.

Therefore, it is very clear the foundation of the U.S. aviation system is safety.

This Committee will continue to maintain safety as its guiding principle and will use the tools at its disposal to reduce the likelihood of tragedies like this from happening again.

I want to start by updating the Subcommittee Members and the public on the Committee's work to date.

Chair DeFazio and I continue to engage with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Boeing, pilots, aviation stakeholders and others about these accidents.

First, on March 19, Chair DeFazio and I requested the Department of Transportation Inspector General (DOT IG) assess the FAA's approach to certifying the Boeing 737 MAX.

Second, the Committee's oversight and investigations team continues to work with the FAA and Boeing on the records requests Chair DeFazio and I sent on the certification of the MAX.

Third, the Committee sent a separate, bipartisan DOT IG request to evaluate aircraft cockpit automation and international pilot training standards.

Fourth, following a request from Chair DeFazio and I for a third-party review of the certification of Boeing's anticipated 737 MAX software update and related training, the FAA established a Joint Authorities Technical Review (JATR) and a Technical Advisory Board (TAB).

The JATR's independent review will ensure thorough oversight of the process and rebuild public confidence that the U.S. is the global standard in aviation safety.

In addition, the TAB, composed of the U.S. Air Force, the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, and NASA, will provide an independent review of the proposed software change and integration into the MAX flight control system.

I encourage all Members of the Subcommittee to personally continue monitoring this situation.

Staff is available for any questions you may have surrounding the investigation and can provide you with updates as they become available.

What I Hope to Hear from Witnesses Today:

Acting Administrator Elwell and Chairman Sumwalt, the Subcommittee understands certain information about the accidents cannot be publicly discussed at this point because the investigations are ongoing.

However, there is still important information that this Subcommittee can learn in today's hearing.

For instance, Mr. Elwell, I look forward to hearing more about the FAA's decision-making

regarding the certification of the 737 MAX.

I want you to clarify the ODA process, as well as the agency's role in determining risk assessments assigned to key safety features on the aircraft, most notably, the Angle of Attack (AOA) sensors and Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS), and whether these features should have been designated as safety critical.

A recent Wall Street Journal article reported an internal FAA review concluded the agency itself failed to perform proper oversight of the certification of the MCAS system. If true, the ODA program is not working as Congress intended.

I also want to hear more about the FAA's role in the development of associated pilot training for the 737 MAX, including opportunities for input from pilots and engagement with Boeing on the related flight manuals.

Additionally, I am interested in the JATR and TAB's future processes and how the work of these two groups aligns with the recently established Safety Oversight and Certification Advisory Committee, as mandated under the FAA bill we passed last year.

Finally, I would like to hear what steps the FAA will take between now and when the Boeing 737 MAX is permitted to fly again.

Administrator Elwell, the FAA has a credibility problem. The FAA needs to fix its credibility problem.

This Committee will work with the FAA as it rebuilds public and international confidence in its decisions, but our job is oversight and the Committee will continue to take this role seriously.

Chairman Sumwalt, I look forward to learning more about the NTSB's collaboration with the foreign investigation authorities and your insights on the preliminary reports for the JT610 and ET302 accidents.

Congress must find answers to what happened surrounding these two accidents and ensure the safety of the Boeing 737 MAX for the sake of the flying public.

The FAA must take steps to restore public confidence in the ability to maintain the safest aerospace system in the world.

Today's hearing comes at the beginning of the Committee's investigative process and is the first in what will likely be a series of hearings on the MAX.

The Committee will continue its thorough investigation until it fully understands all the issues surrounding the 737 MAX accidents.

The Committee will not hesitate to act to ensure the safety of the U.S. aviation system. I will continue to work with Chair DeFazio throughout this process as well as Subcommittee members, the FAA, the NTSB, Boeing, aviation stakeholders and families of victims.

I want to thank today's witnesses and I look forward to hearing you address the issues I

outlined in my opening statement.

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